

Preface

Upon the end of August 2014, I embarked on a mission to add something substantial to the Permaculture community. In my usual fashion I went head first into this project. This assessment and analysis report is the result of the mission I embarked upon.

I first heard of the Scale of Permanence through Edible Forest Gardens. David Jacke expands upon the musings of P.A. Yeomans and created an in depth Scale of Permanence to keep in mind as one observes the things happening on site. I personally never felt that I had seen any sort of work scouring blogs or Permaculture literature that did justice to the Scale of Permanence that David Jacke presented. This is probably because it is an immense amount of information to find, process, and then produce for others in a straight-forward fashion.

But, I am young and of course willing to prove myself as someone who can do good work. About halfway into the process I decided I would make the report pretty and do all my own graphics for the publishing. Because of the length of time and organization it takes to do that, I want to continue to work on it while providing the data-heavy Analysis report, without much assessment yet.

I'll be the first one to say it, this report isn't perfect and I really wanted it to be. Citations may be a little off, definitions aren't quite as robust as I'd like them to be, and illustrations should be available where there are none. However, I also think that one of my main goals of writing the report has been accomplished. I wrote this as a call to those doing design work to go a lot more in-depth and produce more data when writing about their sites. I hope that this report will inspire those out there to record more aspects of their site data.

Site data is important for a couple of reasons. One is phenology, to have more observational accounts of seasonal change throughout the year. I have aggregated data from many sources about different things, but none of these datasets were recorded on site. This report is inaccurate because of the lack of real observation, if anything it is mostly theoretical on temperature, water, soil, and other things that can be tested/measured on site.

Another reason site data is important is so others can try to replicate successes based on real analogous site conditions. For example, the Chestnut-Hazelnut-Apple etc. guild that is gaining popularity in temperate regions. We all know that there are plenty of elements that can be installed onto our sites, but it is also important to give as much contextual detail as possible for where these elements are. For example, there is a hugelkultur bed that has been installed on Sun One. It has not been planted but water patterns have changed on site because of its existence. Hugelkultur installments cause different results in different places, and it would be helpful if those contexts were explicit and mentioned. The hugel was installed before I arrived, but future beds should be recorded with slope, aspect, position of bed relative to slope, elevation, and planted species.

While reading the previous paragraph, one might think that this is possible overkill or paralysis by analysis. Perhaps there is truth to that. For this specific site I was thinking long term and I was focused on 65 acres. It made sense to spend hours finding out nuances of soil types, surficial geology, bedrock geology, and developing a species list. I enjoyed doing it for awhile because I was really curious. I hope that other people who come to the farm build upon this work and fill in the blanks as well as edit my mistakes.

My goals in the future consists of the following:

1. Continue to build upon this site analysis and make in-depth scientific concepts more accessible through info-graphics and simple break downs.
2. Continue developing a workflow on an open-source software platform.
3. Using open-source to create an effective collaborative design process for sites with multiple stakeholders.

-Colin Fontaine

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